



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru  
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Cynaliadwyedd  
The Sustainability Committee**

**Dydd Iau, 17 Chwefror 2011  
Thursday, 17 February 2011**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,  
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.  
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Lorraine Barrett	Llafur Labour
Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Alun Davies	Llafur Labour
Brian Gibbons	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Joyce Watson) Labour (substitute for Joyce Watson)
Irene James	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Lynne Neagle) Labour (substitute for Lynne Neagle)
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Kirsty Williams	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Liberal Democrats (Committee Chair)
Leanne Wood	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Leighton Andrews	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes) Assembly Member, Labour (The Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning)
Katie Blackburn	Pennaeth yr Uned Strategaeth, Yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau Head of Strategy Unit, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Tracey Burke	Cyfarwyddwr, Gweithrediadau, Adran yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth Director, Operations, Department of Economy and Transport
Jeff Collins	Cyfarwyddwr, Cyflenwi Seilwaith, Adran yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth Director, Infrastructure Delivery, Department of Economy and Transport
Melanie Godfrey	Pennaeth yr Is-adran Cyllid Cyfalaf, Yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau Head of Capital Funding Division, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Rose Iles	Yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Alun Ffred Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Plaid Cymru (Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth) Assembly Member, the Party of Wales (The Minister for Heritage)
Jonathan Jones	Cyfarwyddwr Twristiaeth a Marchnata, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Director for Tourism and Marketing, Welsh Assembly Government

Marilyn Lewis	Cyfarwyddwr, Cadw Director, Cadw
Katie-Jo Luxton	Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru Wales Environment Link
Anne Meikle	Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru Wales Environment Link
Paul O'Donovan	Pennaeth Polisi Strategol, Adran yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth Head of Strategic Policy, Department of Economy and Transport
Alison Smith	Adran yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth Department of Economy and Transport

**Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol**  
**National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Aled Jones	Clerc Clerk
Meriel Singleton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 1.01 p.m.*  
*The meeting began at 1.01 p.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon**  
**Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Kirsty Williams:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this afternoon's meeting of the Sustainability Committee at the National Assembly for Wales. I will make the usual housekeeping announcements. In the event of a fire alarm sounding, please leave via the exits and follow the instructions of the ushers. Can everyone please ensure that their mobile phones, pagers and BlackBerrys are switched off? I remind everyone of the availability of simultaneous translation facilities, should you require them. I have received apologies for absence this afternoon from Joyce Watson, Karen Sinclair and Brynle Williams. Alun Davies and Brian Gibbons are substituting for their colleagues once again; it is nice to see you here, gentlemen.

[2] Today, we are going to hear from another set of Ministers with regard to how they are mainstreaming sustainability in their portfolio. We will also be taking evidence from representatives of Wales Environment Link, who will advise us on their views of the proposals to change environmental delivery options in Wales.

1.03 p.m.

**Prif Ffrydio Cynaliadwyedd ac Ymrwymadau 'Cymru'n Un':**  
**Sesiwn gyda'r Gweinidog**  
**Mainstreaming Sustainability and 'One Wales' Commitments:**  
**Ministerial Session**

[3] **Kirsty Williams:** I welcome Alun Ffred Jones, the Minister for Heritage, and his officials to the committee this afternoon. As you are aware, Minister, we are hearing from all your Cabinet colleagues with regard to how, within your portfolios, you are mainstreaming issues of sustainability. We are glad to see you here this afternoon. If you give some brief opening comments, we will then turn to questions from committee members. If your officials could introduce themselves for the Record, we would be very grateful.

[4] **Ms Lewis:** I am Marilyn Lewis, director of Cadw.

[5] **Mr Jones:** Prynawn da, Jonathan Jones wyf i, cyfarwyddwr twristiaeth a marchnata. **Mr Jones:** Good afternoon, I am Jonathan Jones, director of tourism and marketing.

[6] **Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth (Alun Ffred Jones):** Diolch yn fawr am y gwahoddiad. Yr wyf yn falch o gael bod yma. Mae'r papur tystiolaeth yr wyf wedi ei gyflwyno yn manylu ar y ffordd yr wyf yn ceisio prif ffrydio cynaliadwyedd ym mhob agwedd ar fy mhortffolio, wrth weithio gyda phartneriaid ym mhob rhan o Lywodraeth y Cynulliad a thu allan. Mae gan fy mhortffolio swyddogaeth bwysig yn cefnogi a chynnal ein traddodiadau, ein hieithoedd a'n treftadaeth, sydd yn elfennau allweddol o Gymru gynaliadwy a'i diwylliant cyfoethog. Nid yw defnydd ynni ac allyriadau carbon y sector treftadaeth yn cymharu â rhai sectorau eraill, ond mae fy adran wedi ceisio arwain ar nifer o faterion yn ymwneud â chynaliadwyedd. **The Minister for Heritage (Alun Ffred Jones):** Thank you for the invitation. I am pleased to be here. The evidence paper that I have submitted gives details of the way in which I am trying to mainstream sustainability in all aspects of my portfolio, by working with partners in every part of the Welsh Government and outwith Government. My portfolio has an important role in supporting and maintaining our traditions, our languages and our heritage, which are crucial elements of a sustainable Wales and its rich culture. The energy use and carbon emissions of the heritage sector do not compare with certain other sectors, but my department has tried to lead on a number of issues related to sustainability.

[7] Yr wyf yn dweud yn fy mhapur bod dwy ddogfen yn amlinellu fy safbwynt ar y materion hyn, sef y fframwaith a chynllun gweithredu twristiaeth gynaliadwy, sy'n esbonio'r hyn y mae datblygu cynaliadwy yn ei olygu i'r sector twristiaeth yng Nghymru ac yn rhoi arweiniad i'r sawl sy'n hyrwyddo a datblygu twristiaeth, a hefyd y datganiad o'm huchelgais ar gyfer yr amgylchedd hanesyddol yng Nghymru, sy'n ei gwneud yn glir bod yr amgylchedd hanesyddol yn bwysig i'r amgylchedd yng Nghymru ac yn egluro'r potensial i ddatblygu'n gynaliadwy. Terfynaf gyda hynny er mwyn rhoi cyfle ichi ofyn cwestiynau. I state in my paper that two documents outline my views on these issues, namely the sustainable tourism framework and action plan, which explains what sustainable development means for the tourism sector in Wales and gives guidance to those who promote and develop tourism, and my ambition statement for the historic environment in Wales, which makes it clear that the historic environment is important to the environment in Wales and explains the potential for sustainable development. I will end there in order to give you the opportunity to ask questions.

[8] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you very much, Minister. What aspects of the climate change strategy's sectoral targets, if any, do you have responsibility for delivering?

[9] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I have a duty to act to reduce public sector emissions and, in some aspects, to reduce public transport emissions as they affect my portfolio. I have particular responsibility for action 17 of the climate change adaptation delivery plan, which concerns exploring the consequences of climate change for the historic environment. A sub-group of my historic environment group is developing a proposal to collate existing information on the impact of climate change on the historic environment.

[10] **Kirsty Williams:** Could you tell us whether you are working to any targets relating to emissions in your sector? Have you set yourself any targets or are you responding to any?

[11] **Alun Ffred Jones:** There is information about some of the work that has been ongoing. However, there is one specific responsibility with regard to the historic environment and, as I said, a sub-group is acting on that. I am not sure whether there are any specific targets that we need to meet.

[12] **Ms Lewis:** The current target on climate change relates to monitoring the impact of climate change and it looks in particular at the impact of climate change on the historic environment, and also at mitigating the effects of climate change. In terms of targets for carbon emissions, a lot of work is being done, and I think that the Minister was about to discuss that in a few moments, with regard to the eco-lighting project and the sustainable tourism initiative.

[13] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yes, but those are achievements rather than targets.

[14] **Kirsty Williams:** I am sure that we will want to hear about the achievements. Perhaps that takes us onto Irene's question about how you are monitoring your work.

[15] **Irene James:** What mechanisms are in place within your portfolio to achieve the annual reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions? Can you outline how these are being monitored and evaluated?

[16] **Alun Ffred Jones:** There are a number of actions, and I will refer to some of them. One has just been referred to, namely the eco-lighting project. Cadw has undertaken to replace existing high-energy floodlighting with low-energy lighting. That has happened at around 15 sites around Wales. This initiative has seen associated energy consumption and carbon emissions reduce by 50 per cent. There is a further programme for interior lighting, which we hope will reduce emissions by 90 per cent. Cadw is also monitoring energy consumption and carbon emission performance at each of its monuments as a proactive means towards wholesale carbon reduction across the estate. I think that baseline data have been established for each of the sites.

[17] In the field of tourism, Visit Wales is working with Cardiff Business School on a tourism satellite account for Wales in order to measure the key economic and environmental impact of tourism in Wales. I do not know whether you want to elaborate on that, Jo.

[18] **Mr Jones:** Before we set targets, we need to know exactly where we are at the moment. The picture for the tourism industry is not very clear with regard to its impact, so we are working with Cardiff Business School to establish what the current impacts are. The sustainable tourism and transport group met yesterday and agreed that there needs to be more research, which will be carried out as part of our visitor survey in 2011, to discover what those impacts are. Once we know where we are, we can then set targets to reduce it.

[19] **Kirsty Williams:** Brian, you wanted to come in on this point?

[20] **Brian Gibbons:** I would like to make two points. I was interested to hear about your responsibility for the historic environment. In my constituency, a fair amount of work is being done to develop heritage skills to maintain the stock of historic buildings in Wales. How far do you feel the need for historic skills is being met in Wales, and does this part of the sustainability agenda need further work?

[21] **Alun Ffred Jones:** It is crucial, and I refer you to the ambition statement that I produced. It refers specifically to conserving and protecting our historic environment, to the issue of skills, the need to develop such skills in Wales, and to engaging local communities in that work and the enjoyment of such places. You asked whether I thought that we were meeting the need. I know that a great deal of work has gone on in this area, and we were

celebrating some achievements about a year ago in St Fagans.

[22] **Ms Lewis:** There is a partnership project that is funded by the heritage lottery fund, English Heritage and Cadw. It is a traditional skills bursary scheme that is intended to increase the skill set and employability of people in the construction sector, to bring them up to a standard where they can do historic building conservation work. Cadw has a workforce of stonemasons, joiners and carpenters. In the Minister's ambition statement and accompanying action plan, we are committed to setting up new apprenticeships, and we are working with the National Heritage Training Group to develop a UK-wide approach to skills development in this sector.

[23] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Weinidog, byddwch yn ymwybodol o'r adroddiad a gyhoeddwyd ym mis Tachwedd 2009 ar dwristiaeth gynaliadwy a thrafnidiaeth. Yn sgîl yr adroddiad hwnnw, sefydlwyd is-grŵp rhwng yr Adran Dreftadaeth a'r Adran dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth. Drwy gyd-ddigwyddiad hwylus, cynhaliodd yr is-grŵp hwnnw ei gyfarfod cyntaf ddoe. Bwriad y cyfarfod ddoe oedd edrych yn ôl dros yr hyn a gyflawnwyd a gosod blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y dyfodol. A allwch rannu'r wybodaeth honno gyda ni?

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Minister, you will be aware of the report that was published in November 2009 on sustainable tourism and transport. Following that report, a sub-group was established between the Department for Heritage and the Department for the Economy and Transport. By fortunate coincidence, the sub-group met for the first time yesterday. The purpose of the meeting was to look back at what has been achieved and decide on priorities for the future. Can you share that information with us?

[24] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Nid oes gennyf wybodaeth am y cyfarfod ddoe. Efallai eich bod yn gwybod mwy na fi. Yr oedd y cyfarfod yn un pwysig ond mae nifer o bethau pwysig yn digwydd y tu allan i'r grŵp hwnnw. Er enghraifft, mae cynllun i ddatblygu teithiau cynaliadwy yn y parciau cenedlaethol, sy'n golygu na fyddwn yn defnyddio cymaint o ynni ac olew. Hefyd, mae gan Cadw gynllun i geisio cael mwy o bobl i fynd i'n canolfannau treftadaeth ar drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus. Mae hwnnw'n gynllun yr ydym yn ei ddatblygu ar hyn o bryd. Dyna'r math o weithgaredd sy'n digwydd.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I do not have any information about yesterday's meeting. Perhaps you know more than I do. It was an important meeting but many important things are happening outside that group. For example, there is a scheme to develop sustainable tours in the national parks, which will mean that we will use less energy and oil. Also, Cadw has a scheme to try to encourage more people to travel to heritage centres using public transport. That is a scheme that we are currently developing. That is the type of activity that is taking place.

[25] **Mr Jones:** Cefais adroddiad y bore yma o'r hyn a drafodwyd ddoe. Fel y dywedais yn gynharach, penderfynwyd bod angen mwy o ymchwil fel ein bod yn gwybod yn union lle yr ydym yn sefyll. Yn sicr, mae mwy o alw arnom yn Croeso Cymru i gyflwyno negeseuon sy'n sôn am dwristiaeth gynaliadwy i'r diwydiant ac i bobl sy'n dod i Gymru, o ran sut y gallant ein helpu ni drwy'r gwahanol ffyrdd y maent yn dod i Gymru, a beth y maent yn ei wneud ar ôl cyrraedd. Rhaid i ni dderbyn ar hyn o bryd fod y mwyafrif yn dod yn eu ceir, ond ym mhob peth yr ydym yn ei ddweud wrth

**Mr Jones:** I received a report this morning of what was discussed at yesterday's meeting. As I said earlier, it was decided that more research was needed so that we know exactly where we stand. Certainly, there is more of an expectation on us in Visit Wales to convey messages about sustainable tourism to the industry and to people who visit Wales, with regard to how they can help us through the various means by which they travel to Wales, and what they do once they have arrived. We must accept that the majority come here by car, but in all our information to visitors—on our websites, in our pamphlets and on

ymwelwyr—ar ein safleoedd gwe, yn ein television—we suggest that they leave their pamffledi ac ar y teledu—yr ydym yn cars behind once they arrive and use buses, awgrymu eu bod yn gadael eu ceir ar ôl trains and bicycles, or that they walk. cyrraedd a defnyddio bysiau, trenau a beiciau neu eu bod yn cerdded.

[26] **Kirsty Williams:** The report was launched in November 2009. It has taken until yesterday for the sub-group to hold its first meeting. I appreciate that the meeting was only held yesterday, but it seems that one of the things to come out of that meeting is the need to have more research to find out where we are before we can see whether we have made any progress. There does not seem to be a sense of urgency in wanting to take this agenda forward if it has taken this long since the report to have the meeting, only for that first meeting to decide that, actually, you do not have the baseline data. How many more times is this group going to meet, and when? When will we be in a position to see something concrete coming out of this work?

1.15 p.m.

[27] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I admit that progress seems to be inordinately slow on that front, but I would point to the ongoing work with the Cardiff Business School, which is monitoring and measuring the key economic and environmental impacts of tourism in Wales.

[28] **Mr Jones:** I fully accept your point, Chair, but this is a sub-group. Our sustainable tourism forum has been established for much longer, and it has already started the work. Looking at what the industry is doing, along with the three national parks and ourselves, there are already itineraries out there promoting sustainable travel. We are working with local bus companies in the national parks to promote sustainable travel. We did not need a sub-group to tell us to do that. The sub-group is trying to undertake more real analytical work so that we can prove the difference. It goes back to our 'Achieving our Potential' strategy published in 2000, which included our commitment to the sustainable development of tourism. We have been working to those principles ever since.

[29] **Alun Davies:** Sustainable development does not really drive your department's work, does it, Minister? I am thinking about not only the responses to the last series of questions, but also of some of the written evidence that I have read through. I appreciate that significant strides have been made in areas of sustainable tourism, and also in the areas that Cadw is responsible for in terms of the historic built environment. However, the impression that I am gaining—I hope that you will put me right if I am wrong—is that this is an area of work that is recognised and acknowledged, but does not drive your department.

[30] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I think that you would be totally wrong in that, and I would point you again to this document. We are talking here about more than a reduction in carbon emissions, which is one aspect of sustainability, as I presume that you would also have regard to the fact that sustainability is about community development and economic development. I would say that that is fundamental to the work of the department.

[31] In terms of examples of practical actions, I have already referred to some of the actions that Cadw has taken with its estate. I suppose that that is the biggest element within my portfolio, apart from tourism, which is a very difficult area, because its impact is mainly to do with transport. We want to attract more people, and while we would want them to come by train, that option is limited because of the nature of the rail infrastructure.

[32] Other aspects include our work with Amgueddfa Cymru, in which a combined heat and power unit is to be installed at the Cathays park site in March 2011. The National Library of Wales has successfully achieved and maintained green dragon level 2, and has reduced



energy consumption compared with 2006 levels, despite the activation of a new computer room.

[33] These are practical examples of various parts of my portfolio actually doing things that have a direct impact, so I would contend that we are mainstreaming sustainability. Again, I would stress that sustainability is to do with things other than carbon reduction, despite the fact that that is the biggest challenge. In fact, I refer to climate change in the statement as the biggest challenge to us.

[34] **Alun Davies:** I understand that, Minister, and I am grateful for the examples that you gave us, as they go some way towards reassuring me on those points. However, we are coming to the end of the Assembly, and I still get a sense from listening to ministerial presentations, as we pursue this review, that the issue of sustainability—and I accept your wider definition of it—is not something that is embedded in the DNA of the work of the department. I understand and appreciate what you said. When this Government leaves office, do you think that you will have achieved the objectives that you set yourself for mainstreaming sustainability? Are you confident that you have done that as a Minister in your area of responsibility?

[35] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yes. We are not just reacting or responding to demands placed upon us by various strategies in the Government. The work is outlined here, in the action plan that Marilyn is holding up. It is not just a statement. There is a detailed plan here, and you are welcome to read through it. It addresses many of the concerns and it is a practical way of addressing these issues in this area. I have held many summits around this issue and sustainability is at the heart of those discussions. I will be holding one with British Waterways in Brecon in two weeks' time, and that will be addressing sustainability issues.

[36] **Alun Davies:** I will leave it at this point, Chair. I remember attending the launch of the environment strategy for Wales, and the action plan was waved at us then. We have just concluded a review on biodiversity and not one of the witnesses referred to that strategy and its action plans in their evidence to us. The committee is not looking for a paper, but the actions and the achievements. That is where we are having problems at the moment.

[37] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I have already listed a number of practical examples within the national library, the national museum and Cadw. There is an update on the web around the actions that have been taken on all the fronts that have been discussed here. So, you can check up on these things. These are actions around the sourcing of local materials and recycling. That is embedded into the work of Cadw, and I would challenge your view of the work of the department. Perhaps I am putting a great deal of emphasis on the work of Cadw, but that is the only estate that is under Government control within the portfolio. Other things relate to behavioural change, and there is plenty of evidence of action there as well. Marilyn, perhaps you could flesh out some of the things that have been mentioned—

[38] **Kirsty Williams:** Minister, given that our time is short, I will stop you there. We know that these documents are available and we will ensure that everyone has sight of them if they have not had sight of them already. You have at least signposted us to the places where we need to look to discover what your department is doing. If you do not mind, we will move on to Brian Gibbons. Then I will come back to you, Jonathan.

[39] **Brian Gibbons:** You raise an interesting point about people coming to Wales. Would it be fair to say that the more successful the work of your department is, the more you will increase the carbon footprint in Wales—by people moving around to make use of the cultural, heritage and tourist amenities in Wales, or by people coming into Wales by car, aeroplane and sea? So, it is almost the case that success in your department will ultimately be judged by the increased carbon footprint that it generates. That is inevitable. At a Government level, is there

any strategic way in which that increased carbon footprint can be offset? You mentioned discounted train travel and so on. It seems to me that the more successful you are, the bigger the carbon footprint in Wales will be. I do not know whether that is true, but it seems to be inevitable.

[40] **Alun Ffred Jones:** It is an interesting point. I am not sure whether it is a philosophical point, but it is true that the more people who visit, the greater the impact. However, there are examples where we are trying to decrease our carbon footprint. For example, the Sherpa service in Snowdonia national park encourages people to leave their cars and take the bus. They can get on and off and walk through the mountains; that is a practical example of an ongoing initiative. In terms of the impact on tourism, Visit Wales has been working with businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, and that is a practical way of tackling the issue; local sourcing of food is another aspect of the work, which not only benefits the local economy but can contribute by lessening food miles and so on.

[41] **Mr Jones:** I would also like to think that the motor industry is responding to this issue. If you look at the carbon outputs of the cars of 10 or 15 years ago in comparison with the cars of today, and consider the move to hybrid and eventually electric vehicles, we might be able to attract more people and reduce the carbon footprint. I do not think that it is inevitable that an increased number of visitors goes hand in hand with increased pollution from cars.

[42] **Angela Burns:** My question is on how you make a behavioural shift happen. It is all very well putting in all of these schemes—laudable though they are—but the issue is getting people to use them. It strikes me that the whole issue with anything to do with climate change is about persuading the greater bulk of people to change their ways, because the evangelists will do it anyway. I was looking at Cadw’s heritage tourism project, for example, in which advice is to be provided to visitors on travel to sites, including access via public transport, cycling and walking. I looked at the part on national parks; I live in a national park and I know that, come the summer, no matter what you try to do, you cannot get near Freshwater West for all of the cars. What can you do to incentivise behavioural change among ordinary people who are out there trying to enjoy themselves? What links do you have at ground level with the county council, for example, to ensure that buses and alternative forms of transport are laid on at weekends or at decent times so that people with kids or with disabilities can get to and from an attraction? People will argue that that infrastructure is not in place, and I wonder what influence you have on that.

[43] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Before I come on to the final part of your question, you talked about behavioural change. There are practical examples with the National Library of Wales, the arts council and museums where specific actions have been taken internally to change the behaviour of the staff so that those institutions reduce their carbon footprints through reducing energy and paper consumption and controlling waste. All of these things are ongoing and are documented; I am not sure whether you already have that information. The same is true of Cadw, which has set itself the task of reducing the journeys of its staff; for example, by locating staff in the north Wales office in Llandudno, it will be reducing the need for staff to travel from south to north Wales on specific duties. Cadw has done that deliberately to lessen its carbon footprint.

[44] You were talking about the behaviour of the public, with particular reference to tourism. That is mainly the responsibility of the Department for the Economy and Transport, because it controls public buses, grants and so on. However, I gave the example of the Snowdon Sherpa, which is a bus service in Snowdonia that deliberately offers a very regular service to facilitate tourists who want to go on a walk but have to reach the bottom of the mountain to do so. The circular nature of the service’s route allows tourists to do that without taking the car. If you go to Pen-y-Pass at any day in the summer the car park will be full—

that is true—but through good traffic management that has been reduced over the past few years. In conjunction with a good bus service, it means that more people are travelling on public transport. Admittedly, that is a small part of the general picture.

1.30 p.m.

[45] **Mr Jones:** We are very lucky in that research shows that the majority of people who come to Wales are primarily motivated by our beautiful landscape, scenery and environment, so we are already preaching to the converted, if you like. In all of the messages that we convey to our major market, which is England, we say, ‘You are coming here because we have a beautiful country. It has to remain beautiful when you leave here as a tourist’. As long as we can give them, and the local authorities and the businesses, the tools by which they can then lessen their impact on the destination, I think that they will respond. We are talking to the kind of people who understand that they have an impact on the environment. They know that they do not want to destroy the very reason why they come here in the first place.

[46] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Marilyn might like to say something on that.

[47] **Kirsty Williams:** Very briefly, please.

[48] **Ms Lewis:** The focus has largely been on visitors to Wales, but, obviously, one of the big impacts in the portfolio is about influencing the behaviour, attitude and understanding of the citizens and residents of Wales. One of the areas that we have been promoting, in addition to promoting sustainable transport to sites, is the whole other area of Cadw’s work, which is to do with the provision of advice and guidance to owners of properties, such as about how they can put renewable energy systems into a listed property. There is a common myth that that is impossible, but, in fact, it is very easy; you just need to plan. We have the guidance publication about just that to try to help people to overcome those barriers and to prevent them from saying that it is too difficult. Equally, our work on urban characterisation is absolutely about trying to get local communities to think about the fabric, style and texture of their town and how it has grown as it has, which is largely based on the use of locally sourced materials and locally relevant styles, and to think about whether or not they can continue that in any new development or new build, and certainly promoting the recycling of old buildings for new purposes.

[49] **Leanne Wood:** You touched earlier upon the issue of local procurement. Obviously, that potentially has a great contribution to make in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and wider sustainability, because you can cut down on transport, and also there is a potential for job creation in local communities so that communities are more sustainable and economically viable in the long term. You state in your paper that the annual remit letter to the National Library of Wales requires it to mainstream sustainability. You then state:

[50] ‘It must also be aware of, and plan to meet, commitments on sustainable procurement.’

[51] What are those commitments?

[52] **Alun Ffred Jones:** In terms of the library itself?

[53] **Leanne Wood:** Whatever commitments are there on sustainable procurement.

[54] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Again, I will refer to Cadw’s work. New plans are being put in place to source locally more of the goods that are sold through Cadw shops. That has been an ongoing programme for a number of years. Do you have details about that, Marilyn?

[55] **Ms Lewis:** At present, our target is a minimum of 50 per cent—although we are aiming to get up to 75 per cent, if we can—of Welsh-sourced materials that we are able to sell: either Welsh-made or, better still, Welsh-made from Welsh raw materials.

[56] **Leanne Wood:** Therefore, where are you in terms of hitting that target now?

[57] **Ms Lewis:** We are over 50 per cent at present.

[58] **Leanne Wood:** We have heard that there is generally quite a long way to go on local and sustainable procurement. You have mentioned the goods in shops, but is there anything else that you can do to make sure that a sustainable approach to procurement is followed?

[59] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yes. Visit Wales is supporting and promoting local food in restaurants and other establishments. There is a very good example across the road, in the restaurant of the Wales Millennium Centre, which has gone actively down this road with the support, not only of Visit Wales, but also of the rural affairs department. I cannot remember the percentage, but a very high percentage of the food there is now sourced locally. In fact, I was told last night, for example, that the milk that the restaurant was getting was sourced 40 miles away, but that that has now reduced to 8 miles. I am not sure where the restaurant gets it, but that was the claim made last night. In fact, that has been a deliberate policy, supported by Visit Wales in a practical way and also by the Department for Rural Affairs. One swallow does not make a summer, of course, but that is a good and practical example of what we are talking about with regard to food.

[60] **Mr Jones:** That is a win-win situation, because the more local produce that we have in tourism businesses, the more of a sense of place the visitor gets, and he or she will enjoy that, and obviously the more that is bought locally, the more that food miles are reduced. We work closely with local authorities and with our colleagues in the Department for Rural Affairs. I attended a wonderful meet-the-buyer event in Pembrokeshire a week or so ago, where local producers were brought face-to-face with the local tourism industry. That is a great example that is being repeated across Wales.

[61] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I am almost certain that there is a grading system that supports that. I have been in establishments recently, such as bed-and-breakfast accommodation, and have seen that the grading system has driven people to source as much of their food locally as they can, although there are some practical problems in that. So, sourcing food locally can help create a sense of place, along with the promotion of local walks, for example, which also contributes to the creation of a sustainable form of tourism that is more defensible.

[62] **Leanne Wood:** Thank you for that answer, because I was going to ask you specifically about local food, given that it is a big attraction for tourists. So, I am glad to hear that you are promoting it. I also wanted to ask you about ecotourism, given the growing demand for a more green experience on holiday. You mentioned that the biggest market is in England, but I am aware of people who are now deliberately choosing to holiday in Wales for environmental reasons. Is there anything specific that you are doing to promote ecotourism?

[63] **Mr Jones:** You will have picked up on the fact that *National Geographic* chose Pembrokeshire coast as the second best coastal destination.

[64] **Angela Burns:** Even *National Geographic* can get it wrong, Jonathan. [*Laughter.*]

[65] **Mr Jones:** Of course, you think that it is the best coastal destination. As a Pembrokeshire boy, I agree with you entirely, however I have a responsibility for the whole of Wales.

[66] We followed up that announcement with a meeting with *National Geographic*. A gentleman came over last week and we are in discussions with *National Geographic* to see whether we can develop ecotourism further. Our marketing message has to be real—it has to be the truth—and we are not going to green-wash Wales. We are not going to reach our stated desire of being seen as the world’s best sustainable tourism destination until we genuinely believe that we have the products in place. However, we are moving in the right direction. You are right; it is a growth market, not only in England, but also in environmentally sensitive countries overseas, particularly in Europe, such as the Netherlands, Germany and Scandinavia. There is a niche market there.

[67] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I refer you to the ‘proper holidays’ campaign that was run last year and is running again this year on television and in cinemas. The message from that campaign is that what we have in Wales is a superb environment and lots of things to do in it. That message is also consistent with sustainable tourism, despite the inevitable reality, which Brian Gibbons referred to, that tourism brings people in cars.

[68] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you, Minister. Time has beaten us, so I, on behalf of the committee, thank you and your officials for your answers this afternoon. I am very grateful. I have one last request: perhaps we could prevail on you, Marilyn, to drop us a note on the issues around the vulnerabilities of heritage sites and how they may be affected by issues of climate change, particularly on the coast, and also with regard to flooding. It would be great if we could have some further information about what is being done to anticipate and mitigate those threats.

[69] **Mr Jones:** I also offer to provide you with written information on the specific activities and actions that have taken place and are taking place, given that we have not been able to cover them all today.

[70] **Kirsty Williams:** That would be most welcome. I am very grateful to all of you. Thank you very much.

1.39 p.m.

**Prif Ffrydio Cynaliadwyedd ac Ymrwymïadau ‘Cymru’n Un’:  
Sesiwn gyda’r Gweinidog  
Mainstreaming Sustainability and ‘One Wales’ Commitments:  
Ministerial Session**

[71] **Kirsty Williams:** In this session we will be hearing from Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, with regard to his approach to mainstreaming sustainability. Following this session with Leighton Andrews, we will be hearing from officials from the Department for the Economy and Transport. Unfortunately, the Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport is not attending committee today, despite having said originally that he would be able to come, so we will be hearing from his officials. I welcome Leighton Andrews to the committee. Minister, I would be very grateful if you could introduce your officials for the record and make some brief introductory comments on mainstreaming sustainability within your portfolio. As I am sure that you will have anticipated, we will then have a number of questions for you.

[72] **The Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning (Leighton Andrews):** Thank you for that, Chair. With me today to answer questions are Katie Blackburn and Melanie Godfrey. I have no introductory remarks to make and I believe that the committee clerk has advised you that the agreement was that I would be out by 2 p.m. to chair a meeting elsewhere. I apologise, but I was here at 1.30 p.m., ready to start.

[73] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you very much for that, Minister. We will do our very best not to detain you any longer than we need to. Perhaps you could begin by explaining to the committee which aspects of the climate change strategy sectoral targets, if any, you have direct responsibility for.

[74] **Leighton Andrews:** As you are aware, reducing greenhouse gas emissions requires action by the whole Cabinet. Delivery of the 3 per cent target and the sector targets is jointly owned by the Cabinet. We have set sector targets in line with the 'One Wales' commitment and we have gone further than that to ensure that all emissions sectors are covered. The emission reduction delivery plan is clear about the specific actions that we need to take to reduce carbon emissions in Wales. Obviously, education forms part of the wider public sector actions and contributes to raising awareness and encouraging behavioural change. Carbon footprint reduction is already being implemented ahead of our twenty-first century schools programme, through the last tranche of our transitional funding arrangements. We will continue to work with partners to support the reduction of education services' carbon footprint through capital funding, sustainable procurement and energy and waste management.

[75] **Kirsty Williams:** Perhaps you could give us a flavour, Minister, of the extent to which the principles of promoting sustainable development impact on how you make decisions on a daily basis.

[76] **Leighton Andrews:** I am leaving at 2 p.m. for a meeting of the twenty-first century schools programme; in our forward planning for our capital programme, we take commitments on carbon reduction very seriously. Over recent years, we have moved towards a programme that is trying to assist local authorities in the forward planning of their schools provision. Built into that is an examination of things such as how we can ensure that we have proper information and communications technology configuration within our schools. That, in itself, is leading to a number of local authority initiatives that have our support and that will help us meet carbon reduction challenges in due course.

[77] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Cyfeiriasoch at raglen ysgolion yr unfed ganrif ar hugain sy'n rhaglen uchelgeisiol iawn, ac mae eich amcanion yn rhai uchelgeisiol dros ben. Mae eich cyllideb, fel cyllideb pob Gweinidog arall, wedi cael ei heffeithio gan doriadau yn yr arian sy'n dod o'r Trysorlys yn San Steffan i'r Cynulliad. A ydych wedi amcangyfrif yr effaith a gaiff y toriadau o ran cyflawni eich amcanion yn y tymor hir a'r tymor byr?

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** You referred to the twenty-first century schools programme, which is a very ambitious programme, and your aims are extremely ambitious. Your budget, like the budgets of all other Ministers, has been affected by reductions in the funding that comes from the Treasury in Westminster to the Assembly. Have you estimated the impact that the cuts will have in terms of achieving your aims in the long and short term?

[78] **Leighton Andrews:** As I believe you will appreciate, Rhodri Glyn, the reductions in the capital funding that we receive from the UK Government are very severe. They amount to a reduction of 40 per cent for the Assembly Government. Within education, we have had to take our share of those reductions, so there will, inevitably, be consequences in due course. The programme will take longer to implement than we would have liked.

[79] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Serch hynny, nid oes gennych unrhyw amcangyfrif, ar hyn o bryd, o'r effeithiau posibl ar y rhaglen.

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Nevertheless, you do not have any estimate, at present, of the possible impact on the programme.

[80] **Leighton Andrews:** Just to explain, we asked all local authorities to submit their

strategic outline programmes by 10 December last year. We have now received those submissions from all 22 authorities. They were asked to give us an investment profile for a period of 12 years, in bands of three years.

1.45 p.m.

[81] We are currently evaluating those submissions. We anticipate making an announcement in July, which will explain the programmes that we have been able to approve as a result of those considerations.

[82] **Brian Gibbons:** Have any calculations been made of the green premium required to deliver against the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method standards, which all public buildings use in Wales? Rhodri Glyn's question refers to that implicit cost. If there is a premium in terms of capital build, what would the payback time be in terms of delivering savings through improved efficiency and so on?

[83] **Leighton Andrews:** I think that we might be in a better position to give you an answer to that for the whole programme when the work on assessing the strategic outline plans has been completed. We are working very hard to try to ensure that BREEAM standards are incorporated within schools. I opened a school in Ynyshir in my constituency in the last 10 days, which, I think, has Lorraine Barrett's grand-daughter as one of its pupils, and that has been developed to BREEAM standards with the active collaboration of the teachers and pupils. It is going to be an exemplar of the kind of school building that we are looking for. It was developed very much in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. It is better that we give you an effective understanding when we have done the analysis for the whole programme on the strategic outline plans.

[84] **Brian Gibbons:** That would be very interesting.

[85] **Lorraine Barrett:** For the record, it is my niece who goes to Ynyshir Primary School.

[86] **Leighton Andrews:** I knew that there was a connection.

[87] **Lorraine Barrett:** Ynyshir is my home town and I attended the old Ynyshir school, which was not an environmentally friendly building, and was very cold.

[88] Minister, the Sustainability Committee's July 2009 report into mainstreaming sustainability in ministerial portfolios mentioned concern about the lack of the effectiveness of the policy gateway tool. Few Ministers were able to tell us how many of their policies had been rated positively for sustainability outcomes through that gateway. Since examining the policy gateway in 2009, how has it been changed within your portfolio?

[89] **Leighton Andrews:** Most of the changes that were undertaken related to the policy threshold. We introduced a requirement to use an updated version of it at an early stage of the development of all our policies. All policy leads have to consider the impact that their proposed policy will have on the wellbeing of the people of Wales over the longer term; how the policy integrates social, economic, cultural and environmental objectives; how it tackles the causes and consequences of climate change; the long-term impacts and implications of whether it will deliver sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits; what effects it will have on Wales's ecological footprint and other sustainable development indicators; sustainable procurement; and, the contribution of the policy to the delivery of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the biodiversity duty.

[90] **Lorraine Barrett:** I think that the Minister has answered my second question as well.

[91] **Leanne Wood:** In the paper that you have provided to us, you talk about the sustainable procurement assessment framework that is under review, which is helping colleges to develop a sustainable procurement strategy and action plan to improve the sustainability of their practices. You also talk about the work that you are doing with the Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills on the green jobs strategy. We have had evidence that suggests that there is still a long way to go on sustainable procurement processes, in terms of ensuring that sustainable procurement is incorporated into the procurement process. Can you tell us what you are doing to ensure that there is a sustainable approach to procurement in your portfolio?

[92] **Leighton Andrews:** This has been of interest to me since my previous ministerial job, when I worked on the development of the Can Do Toolkit, which helped many registered social landlords to incorporate community benefit clauses within the programmes that they were developing alongside the Deputy Minister for Housing. In respect of education, all higher education institutions have engaged with the sustainable procurement assessment framework, and, as at December 2010, seven universities had achieved the required standard of a level 3 assessment, which means that a few have not. We have funded a project with the Welsh further education purchasing consortium to undertake a sustainable procurement assessment framework review at further education institutions. That will assist colleges in developing a sustainable procurement strategy and action plan to improve the sustainability of their practices. In addition, sustainable procurement issues are central to the work that we are doing on the twenty-first century schools programme.

[93] **Leanne Wood:** Do you know how much procurement in your department is undertaken locally? What are your targets for the future?

[94] **Leighton Andrews:** We have to be careful when we use the term 'locally', because there are definitional issues, as you probably know, when you are setting tenders for procurement. Clearly, we operate a wide range of programmes. If you look at the objectives that we set, you will see that we are setting targets for many procurement contracts in relation to what is called 'targeted recruitment and training', whereby the programmes that are offered are required to demonstrate how many people they will upskill, for example. Working with colleagues in the Department for the Economy and Transport, we have been very much at the forefront of pushing those forward. There are global figures in relation to the Assembly Government that can be supplied to the committee. One challenge for us in the twenty-first century schools programme is ensuring that we are able to drive forward community benefits, and that we do so within the overall financial envelope that we have for the programme, which, as Rhodri Glyn observed earlier, has been reduced as a result of the capital programme that we now have following the UK Government's cuts in our budgets.

[95] **Leanne Wood:** I understand the point that you make about price, but I am not sure whether it necessarily follows that local procurement has to be more expensive; there may be an argument there. Could anything be done to introduce criteria on greenhouse gas emission reductions as part of the procurement process, or would we not be allowed to do that because of the European competition directives?

[96] **Leighton Andrews:** I agree with your point that local procurement does not necessarily have to be more expensive. One issue is that there is sometimes tension. If contractors are able to deliver a relatively standard model of school, for example, the question then is how we ensure that they are engaging appropriately with subcontractors.

[97] I should also say a word about green skills. Some very good work is being undertaken partly under the auspices of Business in the Community in respect of green skills, which relates to your earlier question. We have met a number of employers who are currently



working particularly in the Heads of the Valleys area, and we are looking at the opportunities for green skills jobs and what we need to do to ensure that people with the right skills are coming through. We have started to develop a programme on that. We could let you have a note with more detail on some of the questions that you have asked.

[98] **Leanne Wood:** I would specifically like to know whether reductions in greenhouse gas emissions could be incorporated. With regard to school meals, for example, if you could procure the vast majority of the food that goes onto the children's plates locally, that could be a big driver in the local economy as well as ticking all the boxes in relation to climate change.

[99] **Leighton Andrews:** We are aware, from the way in which contracts have been done in certain parts of Europe, for example, that one way in which they have been able to ensure a higher degree of local procurement has been to specify orders for certain kinds of produce. For example, a single order would be done for potatoes or whatever it might be. Clearly, those are moves that we would like to encourage. Through some of the programmes that we have been running, such as free school milk for the under sevens and so on, we give considerable support to local production in Wales. We seek to ensure that, within contracts, we are looking for the most sustainable forms of construction in what we are doing. However, with regard to the specific question that you ask on the emissions reduction, we will get a note to you.

[100] **Kirsty Williams:** Minister, I am very mindful of your meeting at 2 p.m., so that brings to a conclusion the questions that the committee has for you this afternoon. For the record, this item was on the agenda to run until 2 p.m., and your office did not inform us that you had a meeting at 2 p.m.. If it had done so, we would have done our best to find an alternative slot for you and we would not have curtailed your evidence giving. However, we are grateful for your attendance.

[101] **Leighton Andrews:** For the record, Chair, what was agreed with my office was a slot from 1.30 p.m. to 2 p.m.. I started my session at 1.40 p.m.. I am perfectly happy to carry on answering questions until 2 p.m..

[102] **Kirsty Williams:** I think that we are finished. Thank you for your attendance.

[103] **Brian Gibbons:** This is an excellent committee. I will have to come more often. *[Laughter.]*

[104] **Kirsty Williams:** You are here often enough, Brian. *[Interruption.]* I remind Members that we are on the record. Perhaps we should have these discussions later.

1.56 p.m.

**Prif Ffrydio Cynaliadwyedd ac Ymrwymadau 'Cymru'n Un':  
Sesiwn gyda'r Gweinidog  
Mainstreaming Sustainability and 'One Wales' Commitments:  
Ministerial Session**

[105] **Kirsty Williams:** As I said earlier, we do not have a Minister at all for this item. His office did inform us that he would be unavailable. Instead, we will be hearing from officials from the Department for the Economy and Transport. You will be aware that this is the second time that the committee has considered this issue. The first time that the committee looked at the issue of mainstreaming sustainability, the Minister for the Economy and Transport was unavailable but sent his officials. However, following that evidence, he made himself available. I have a commitment from the Minister that, should we find it necessary to speak to him after this evidence session with officials, he will do his best to make himself

available on another date. However, I am very grateful to the officials for coming along this afternoon. Please introduce yourselves and tell us what your roles are, for the Record. We will then turn to questions, unless one of you is taking the lead with an introductory statement. Please do not touch the microphones; the technical experts will switch them on for you.

[106] **Mr O'Donovan:** My name is Paul O'Donovan, head of strategic policy in the Department for the Economy and Transport.

[107] **Ms Burke:** Good afternoon. Prynawn da. I am Tracey Burke, director of strategy and operations in the Department for the Economy and Transport.

[108] **Ms Smith:** Good afternoon. I am Alison Smith, sustainability manager in the Department for the Economy and Transport.

[109] **Mr Collins:** Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Collins, director of the infrastructure group in the Department for the Economy and Transport.

[110] **Kirsty Williams:** Tracey, are you going to take the lead and make some introductory statements?

[111] **Ms Burke:** I am going to take the lead, but I am not going to make any introductory comments, other than to say that we will attempt to answer your questions as best we can. If you feel that we have not answered them sufficiently, we are happy to try to clarify things this afternoon if we can. If we cannot, we will provide a note following the meeting.

[112] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you, Tracey. I will kick off. Which aspects of the climate change strategy sectoral targets does the Minister have responsibility for?

[113] **Ms Burke:** Within the climate change strategy, we have a responsibility to make a contribution to the overall target in terms of the reductions. However, our specific sectors are business and transport.

[114] **Kirsty Williams:** Could you give us some detail on what those targets are and what you are working towards? To what extent do you feel you are achieving those to date?

[115] **Ms Burke:** Certainly. As I say, we have two sectors. On the transport side, we have actions on developing sustainable travel centres, promoting eco-driving, walking, cycling and investment in public transport. On the economy side of things, we have actions on enhancing support for business, encouraging innovation, sharing good practice and so on. I will ask Jeff to give you an update on the transport side and Paul, and perhaps Alison, to update you on the economy side.

[116] **Mr Collins:** I apologise in advance that I may descend into percentages and statistics.

2.00 p.m.

[117] **Kirsty Williams:** Do not worry, Mr Collins; this committee loves percentages and statistics.

[118] **Mr Collins:** Excellent. Of the overall 3 per cent target, transport is looking to deliver about 0.44 per cent, which is about a sixth. We have an action plan with 11 points. As Tracey mentioned, we have sustainable travel centres, eco-driving, promoting walking and cycling and so on. It is about offering convenient and smarter choices and training people through personalised travel planning. We have investment in public transport, which means investment in buses and rail travel. Some of those investments are not only about improving

the frequency of services, so that people have an alternative choice, but enabling better access through things such as the Harrington hump, where we put a supplementary piece on a platform to allow easier access to trains.

[119] In those 11 items in our climate change targets, we have a variety of contributions. We have an expected outcome in each area and we have a percentage measure for those areas. At the moment, the total greenhouse gas emissions are calculated by AEA Technology, which looks at hydrocarbon consumption, fleet arrangements and so on. We got an outcome that said that we were emitting about 6 megatonnes of carbon per year in 2008, and that is dropping. Those are the areas. It is all about sustainable travel centres, personalised travel planning, offering a choice, the convenience of choices and training people, for want of a better phrase, to use the system more effectively.

[120] **Mr O'Donovan:** On the business side, under the banner of responsible business practices, we provide business support and advice to businesses of all sizes and in all sectors across Wales through our website [business.wales.gov.uk](http://business.wales.gov.uk) and the contact centre, which people can phone to get advice. We co-operate with the Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing under the Arbed banner to create an integrated approach to energy efficiency, at both a domestic and business level.

[121] Through our innovation function, we are prioritising research in sectors such as environmental efficiency. You may have seen the news yesterday that a new project will be undertaken at the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences in Aberystwyth related to biocrops and biorefining. We made a substantial investment in that research project. We are investing in the Low Carbon Research Institute, which is research undertaken by a network of universities across Wales.

[122] In addition, in one of the six key sectors for economic renewal—the energy and environment sector—we have established a cross-sectoral team on energy and environment to ensure that the promotion and commercialisation of carbon reduction in terms of sustainable businesses save money and energy, but also provide an opportunity for new technologies that can be commercialised. Finally, on the infrastructure side, we are investing in twenty-first century broadband, which will bring advantages across Wales in carbon reduction, moving towards more knowledge-based businesses and different types of businesses that are able to take advantage of that digital backbone infrastructure.

[123] **Brian Gibbons:** On that last point, what is your take on how keen business is to hear the low carbon message? Is there enthusiasm out there? Some high energy users will see the advantage, but, in general, do people feel that this is a social responsibility that they need to take on board? So, the first question is on the general mood.

[124] When Flexible Support for Business existed, in theory at least—I do not know what the practice was—advisers were expected to query the carbon footprint of the businesses that engaged with them. I wonder whether that expectation has been carried over into the economic renewal programme and how that will take place. Related to that, this morning, at the meeting of the Enterprise and Learning Committee, we heard about the case manager role—I cannot remember the exact job title—for businesses that are anchors and are regionally important. Will those case managers have a low-carbon brief? In other words, while the companies might want to discuss marketing or export or something such as that, will those case managers have a proactive brief to query the carbon footprint of these businesses?

[125] **Ms Burke:** I am happy to start on that and then hand over. On the general mood, obviously it varies, but we find that most businesses see a social responsibility there, and are very interested in looking at measures that they can take, particularly around energy

efficiency and areas where there are cost savings and benefits for the company itself. What they tend to seek from us is advice and information about the best ways of doing that, so we can feel confident that the majority of businesses seem to have that at heart, and want to do that. Do you want to pick up on that, Paul?

[126] **Mr O'Donovan:** In terms of the advisers and the change from FS4B, we still have the same customer management system, which includes an analysis of the resource efficiency of the company. Going forward, with the new relationships that we have with companies in the sector, and anchor companies, we would expect them to comply with the spirit and the letter of Welsh Assembly Government policy on issues such as carbon reduction. That also applies to any building work. We would expect that to meet the highest standards where we are providing some support or input. So, that continues.

[127] **Brian Gibbons:** What about the anchor companies and the regionally important companies?

[128] **Mr O'Donovan:** We would have the same expectation. There is a realisation that getting support from the Welsh Assembly Government involves some quid pro quo in the companies meeting some of their corporate and social responsibility requirements while benefitting from working with the Assembly Government.

[129] **Brian Gibbons:** You said that companies that do certain things are expected to comply. Does that apply to companies that secure loans under the economic renewal programme? Would it include research and innovation companies that are getting money under the innovation grants, or even under the local development fund? Could people lose their money if they did not deliver against the carbon—

[130] **Mr O'Donovan:** During the assessment process, the contribution towards our cross-cutting priorities in the Assembly Government will be measured for repayable business finance, as it was under the previous grant regime. So, if the recipient did not meet the requirements, there would not be a follow-up offer. There is a legal contract between the Assembly Government and the company or research institute, with specific targets that must be met on what it will do, and a specific agreement around that piece of financing.

[131] **Brian Gibbons:** Obviously, jobs are the No. 1 priority, along with delivery against the innovation plans. However, you are saying that there will also be an expectation in relation to, in the broadest terms, reducing the carbon footprint.

[132] **Mr O'Donovan:** In the broadest terms, and that would be during the assessment phase. I do not think that there is a measurement phase during the run-through of the project.

[133] **Kirsty Williams:** That brings us nicely to Leanne's points around the ERP.

[134] **Leanne Wood:** How are you measuring the impact of the ERP on greenhouse gas emission reduction?

[135] **Ms Burke:** I was at the meeting of the Enterprise and Learning Committee this morning, at which we were talking about measuring the impact of economic renewal as a whole. We were talking about how difficult it is to get an appropriate set of indicators and measures, because we are moving from quite direct business support to longer-term support across a much wider policy area through the ERP. During the consultation phase, we asked people how they thought we should measure things going forward. Everyone agreed that we needed to measure things very carefully and very well, but there was much less consensus on what exactly we should be measuring. So, the framework for measuring the progress of economic renewal is still being developed. The Minister said in committee this morning that

we will publish that information in March. That needs to be consistent with the sustainable development indicator framework for the Welsh Assembly Government. At the outset of the economic renewal programme, we made it clear that we wanted to make sustainable development the central organising principle of the strategy, and we have been clear about some of the conflicts that there can be in terms of competing priorities between economic, social and environmental objectives, and some of the challenges in terms of improving resource productivity and decarbonising energy supplies. So, we have had that very much in mind.

[136] Some of the indicators that we have looked at are around ecological footprint, resource efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions and the energy intensity of the economy. However, there is no getting away from the fact that some of these are quite hard to quantify. We have been working with environment, sustainability and housing colleagues to look at the quantification methods. We have also been looking at pilot schemes that have taken place elsewhere. Alison will be able to say something about that.

[137] **Ms Smith:** It is an area that is evolving at the national level as well. We have been working with other organisations such as the regional development agencies on some of the carbon assessment tools that they have developed. We have been looking at how we apply this at a national level.

[138] **Leanne Wood:** When you say ‘national’, do you mean UK?

[139] **Ms Smith:** At a UK level, yes. We have been looking at how we can translate that to Wales to integrate it in our business planning process and our way of working in Wales. However, it is very much an evolving area.

[140] One of the other areas where we are very strong is our internal governance framework, which has been set up with this in mind. We are looking at how we can link this in to our internal business planning processes and procedures to be more effective.

[141] **Kirsty Williams:** May I interrupt for just a second? If the central organising principle behind the plan was sustainability and the plan was published a number of months ago, and we are currently still working with a view to publication next month of some of these indicators, why were they not developed at the same time as the programme? Is it too much to expect for this work to have gone on hand in hand with the policy development of the ERP, so that it would not be a case of ‘Now we have the plan, we have to see how it fits into this central organising principle of sustainability, and come up with some way of monitoring this’? Should the plan not have been developed in conjunction with that monitoring work if it was to be truly meaningful, rather than it being an afterthought that ‘We better have something to go alongside this’?

[142] **Ms Burke:** I do not think that it was an afterthought. We looked at a range of indicators at the outset of the economic renewal programme across the three pillars of sustainable development: environmental, social and economic. That work was fundamental at the start of our analysis process. However, we recognised at the end of the process that we needed to publish an evaluation or outcomes framework, and it has been a matter of agreeing the final suite of indicators. People want to know different things about what we are doing. For example, the long-term indicators, such as the key economic indicators, are very important, and we need to track those. However, people are also very interested to know what we are doing on a real-time basis and in monitoring our progress in delivering those actions. Those are more output or activity-type indicators. So, it is quite a complex area, and it has taken us some time to develop.

[143] **Leanne Wood:** Welsh industry is one of the highest greenhouse gas-emitting

industries, and you mentioned earlier that there is often a conflict between job creation and the environment. For example, when there is a proposal to open an opencast mine or coal-fired power station, that obviously conflicts with environmental objectives. How does the department balance those conflicts?

2.15 p.m.

[144] **Ms Burke:** Every project or major decision that the Assembly Government has to take on what it supports has to go through quite a rigorous process. We look at those competing objectives and try to provide a balanced assessment of what we think the costs and benefits of that proposal are, in the short and long term. A decision is then taken based on that cost-benefit analysis.

[145] **Leanne Wood:** How much weight is given to the environment in that?

[146] **Ms Burke:** It is hard to say that it is a certain percentage or amount. In taking a sustainable development approach, we are trying to look at all three pillars in a balanced way across the piece. It is hard to talk generally about it and say that the weighting of the decision would be X per cent. We try to factor all these issues into the decision that is taken.

[147] **Mr O'Donovan:** The industrial base in Wales is changing and evolving from heavy carbon-producing industries, and other ones are coming in their place. We want the heavy carbon emitters to be best in class in terms of their emissions at a European level. We are not saying: 'I'm sorry, you are a heavy carbon emitter, so you must go somewhere else'. We expect high standards and we want to drive high standards. We do not want to export carbon problems to other parts of the world.

[148] **Brian Gibbons:** There will be a cost to implementing the EU emissions trading scheme and the UK carbon reduction commitment. What sort of work has been done to evaluate the cost of compliance to industry in Wales? How is the Assembly Government working with businesses to allow them to comply with these requirements, while maintaining their commitment? Would you like to see any further changes—for example, with the EU's approach to coal and steel in Wales? It is not very supportive at the moment, for historical reasons. It seems to me that that attitude should change and that there should be much greater engagement if we are to deliver these EU ETS and carbon reduction commitments.

[149] **Ms Burke:** Much of the work on the EU ETS and the carbon reduction commitment are being led by our colleagues in the Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing. We work quite closely with them. I do not feel able to answer your question fully.

[150] **Kirsty Williams:** That is fine. We can certainly get back to the appropriate officials to get that information for you, if you like, Brian.

[151] **Brian Gibbons:** I think so.

[152] **Kirsty Williams:** Lorraine has the next question.

[153] **Lorraine Barrett:** The Minister's paper states that encouraging behavioural change is the key to success in reducing emissions from transport. How is the Minister ensuring that there is behavioural change at the grass roots to incorporate sustainability on a daily basis? What progress has been made as regards a modal shift in transport?

[154] **Mr Collins:** On encouraging behavioural change, we have just completed a European tendering exercise to appoint a contractor to undertake a framework for personalised travel planning on our behalf—I think that Sustrans was the successful contractor. This is a directed

and focused behaviour-change strategy whereby people are invited to take part. It is not a blanket approach, so we are responding to people who are keen to do it anyway. We will give them encouragement, training and information, and show them how to use the transport system, which some are probably are not aware of. So, we have a rolling programme, which is on the back of the Sustainable Travel Towns initiative. That is the more direct approach.

[155] As I said earlier, on the indirect approach, what we really need to do is to provide a transport system that is convenient and easy to use and that provides a reasonable choice. You will, therefore, see increased efforts in relation to park-and-ride services. We are looking at the modal interchanges to enable people to stop at places like Taff's Well to jump on a train, rather than them having to fight their way into Cardiff on the A470. You will see a number of infrastructure investments being made, such as the Pont y Werin bridge, and the softer things, like training people. We are trying to implement a series of hard measures through the Sustainable Travel Towns initiative, which will facilitate behavioural changes in the way that people make choices. An encouragement programme will also be rolled out across Wales, that is, the personalised travel planning. We have targets; England is a little ahead of us in certain areas and is looking at a 9 per cent modal shift and bus patronage up by 20 per cent. We know the outcomes that we should be seeing and we have measures in place that should bring results. In Cardiff, we are looking to baseline personalised travel planning; it could be argued that we should have been a bit more rigorous and established the baseline before introducing the initiative, but we started it then because it was an opportune time to get going with it. There will be a retrospective baseline in Cardiff, and we will be looking at things like bus patronage and car journeys. For Môn a Menai, we have time to establish that baseline to see what we are doing. I have all of the information on the aspects that I have described, and the fundamental thing is being able to measure our expectations.

[156] **Lorraine Barrett:** Since examining the policy gateway in 2009 as part of the committee's scrutiny of how Ministers are mainstreaming sustainability in their portfolios, how has the policy gateway been changed?

[157] **Ms Burke:** I am obviously aware of the review of the policy gateway, and most of the changes have been made to the policy threshold, which is a tool that sits within the process. The latest version has a number of requirements for those of us who develop policy in terms of the extent to which policies will deliver sustainable economic, environmental and social objectives. It might be helpful for us to talk about taking some of our policies through that process and how, as a result, that has altered the policies.

[158] **Mr O'Donovan:** We took the emerging thoughts on the economic renewal programme through the policy gateway process in April or May of last year. That process covers the nine chapters of the 'One Wales' agreement, such as 'Living Communities' and 'A Prosperous Society', which all involve sustainable development. The process was useful in giving recommendations about where we needed to look further; for example, we were asked to look at the spatial, regional and economic aspects of our policy, which led us to bring in things such as the regional engagement teams, the regional fund and the concept of regionally important companies. Under the bit on a sustainable environment, it suggested that we look at companies' energy use and build that into the economic renewal programme. The process that you go through is useful in helping you to refine your thoughts in relation to policy, and I am pleased to say that we scored between four and five out of a maximum of five in the nine areas of the gateway.

[159] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you, Mr O'Donovan; I think that that is first time that we have heard an example of a policy that has been through the gateway and has been changed as a result. It is useful to have an example of the gateway being used for something.

[160] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Congratulations to you as a department for scoring between four and five in that process with regard to the policy gateway. In your paper, you mentioned the fact that the general principles of the sustainability policy become specific requirements in terms of projects. Jeff Collins referred to behavioural change, but can you outline any particular project where those principles have become actual requirements of the project and have changed the nature of the project as a result?

[160] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Llongyfarchiadau i chi fel adran am gael rhwng pedwar a phump yn y broses o ran y porth i bolisiâu. Yn eich papur, soniasoch am y modd y mae egwyddorion cyffredinol polisi cynaliadwyedd yn cael eu trosglwyddo'n ofynion penodol o ran prosiectau. Soniasodd Jeff Collins am newid mewn ymddygiad, ond a allwch amlinellu prosiect arbennig lle mae'r egwyddorion hynny wedi'u gosod fel gofynion gwirioneddol i'r prosiect ac wedi newid siâp a ffurf y prosiect oherwydd hynny?

[161] **Mr Collins:** I can give you a couple of tangible examples. When we consider a major transport intervention, we run a process called WelTAG—the Welsh transport planning and appraisal guidance. That process assesses various options; there is no particular scoring regime, but, to some extent, it is an intuitive approach to how each particular solution would respond in terms of the economy, social justice and the environment. WelTAG also requires stuff like health impact assessments, economic impact assessments and environmental impact assessments. An example of something that has gone through that process and, as a result, the tangible output of the project changed, is the Church Village bypass, where we encouraged the local authority to adopt these principles. As a result, the community route was highlighted and included as a deliverable within that project. So, that was a particular example. Is that okay?

[162] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, absolutely; thank you for that. Irene has the next question.

[163] **Irene James:** In his paper, the Deputy First Minister states that he works closely with the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing and the Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration. Are there any other Ministers that the Deputy First Minister is working with to ensure cross-portfolio collaboration? If there are, how often do these meetings occur and in what format?

[164] **Ms Burke:** From the economic renewal perspective, we saw a degree of collaboration that we had not seen before in terms of joint working across the Assembly Government. The economic renewal programme is about taking a whole-Government approach to the economy, which has meant the Minister for the economy and transport not only working closely with the Ministers who we named in that paper, but also with the Minister for Business and Budget, looking at issues of procurement, regulation, planning and so on. So, our department has a high degree of joint working on issues to do with economic renewal, at both ministerial and official levels.

[165] I have given you some examples of joint working with regard to procurement, planning and regulation, but we also work closely with colleagues from the Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing on things like the natural environment framework, which I am sure that you will have heard quite a lot about in this committee, and on broader areas like the Wales biodiversity partnership and ecosystem services. We can genuinely say that there is a high degree of co-operation and collaboration between our department and other departments.

[166] **Irene James:** Does that happen regularly?

[167] **Ms Burke:** At an official level, we have regular boards and meetings to discuss this



issue. We have a governance structure around the development of the economic renewal programme, where we have monthly updates from each department about how they are taking forward aspects of that.

[168] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you very much. I do not think that there are any further questions from the committee this afternoon. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance and your answers this afternoon. We are very grateful for your evidence.

2.29 a.m.

### **Opsiynau Darpariaethau Amgylcheddol yng Nghymru: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Environmental Delivery Options in Wales: Evidence Session**

[169] **Kirsty Williams:** Members will be aware that, in July last year, the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, Jane Davidson, gave a written statement stating that one of the issues for the natural environment framework was to consider whether the current delivery arrangements were suitable for future needs. She went on to state that

[170] ‘The work will look at roles and functions, including the potential costs and benefits of separate Wales bodies and merging some or all of the delivery bodies’.

2.30 p.m.

[171] This afternoon, we have an opportunity to take evidence from representatives of Wales Environment Link regarding the Minister’s stated intentions. We are very pleased to welcome Katie-Jo Luxton and Anne Meikle. Thank you for making yourselves available to the committee this afternoon. We are keen to hear your views on how you feel delivery mechanisms could be enhanced and improved upon. Would you like to make some brief opening statements before we turn to questions from the committee?

[172] **Ms Luxton:** Thank you very much. I think that I am known to most people here. I am Katie-Jo Luxton, the director of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Cymru. I am representing Wales Environment Link today with my colleague, Anne Meikle, from WWF Cymru.

[173] We have submitted a short paper that details a number of principles that we think are very important. I do not propose to go over those now, but I would like to highlight three issues in our introductory statement. This committee has led the way in Europe in holding the Government to account on biodiversity loss. The scrutiny that was completed by the committee, which was reported on earlier this year, means that this is the only parliamentary body in Europe to have done that on biodiversity loss in 2010. I was struck by the fact that the first five or six recommendations by the committee refer to the need to mainstream the impacts of activity undertaken by the rest of Government on biodiversity. The fact that we have not properly mainstreamed environmental impacts into our thinking represents a big chunk of the work, and that was the issue in your first recommendations. I would like to emphasise that there is a temptation to focus on environmental governance and the structures and architecture of agencies and bodies, which is quite appealing to Government, but I would like to caution that that is less than half of the challenge. Much of the environmental challenge is about mainstreaming sustainability outside environmental bodies. So, I will open with those cautionary words.

[174] Secondly, Wales Environment Link thinks that, to make the commitment to making a large change to environmental governance in Wales, we need to ensure that it is worth the pain and the cost in the short term. Therefore, we must aim for something that is better than what we have now. Wales Environment Link is clear that we want to have a single body that

is an environmental champion—or I suppose that ‘environmental guardian’ would be another way of putting it—and that we facilitate a real change in culture of improvement, rather than just looking after and safeguarding the existing environment and managing the resources. This environmental body would look at how we improve our environment. It is about more than a culture of regulation and management; it is about setting high ambitions for change and enhancement. That must be a part of any new body, because any change will cost money rather than making immediate savings. It will certainly cost money to deliver on the ground while the change is taking place.

[175] My third point relates to one or two particular principles that are very important in environmental governance, namely independence and transparency. There are many reasons why we think that it is necessary to have an independent voice on the environment, but this is particularly true with regard to the ambition for sustainable development in this country. It is very important for a body that is outside Government to be able to offer Government independent and authoritative advice on the environment. It may then be for Government to make a political choice between certain actions, but it is very important to have a detailed understanding of the environment and a sound evidence base on it. The environment is quite a complex subject and it is difficult for Government to do.

[176] It is also important that that is transparent. There are a number of cases in Europe where countries that do not have an independent voice on the environment are being looked at in relation to their compliance with European legislation. There is a case at the moment involving the Northern Irish Government, which does not have an independent voice on the environment, in relation to the strategic environmental assessment directive. The question of whether it is in breach of the directive is being considered, because one Government department has given advice to another Government department, and questions have been asked as to whether or not that was transparent and independent. Wales Environment Link believes strongly that that is not the direction in which we should be heading in Wales. I will conclude there in order for you to ask questions.

[177] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you very much, Katie-Jo. I do not think that the committee would disagree with any of the principles that you have outlined this afternoon, but the paper comes down well and truly on the fence. We are interested in hearing what you think of the Government’s proposals and the potential to merge some or all of these bodies. I accept the principles: they are strong guiding principles for any organisational change, but how do you feel about change? Should the Government merge some or all of these bodies?

[178] **Ms Luxton:** It is difficult for bodies in Wales Environment Link to come to a conclusion about that, because we have not seen a proposal. We understand from the Minister’s announcement that the Government has undertaken an initial feasibility study. The original announcement was that the Government was looking at options for mergers. The Minister has recently stated that it is looking at one option, to bring the three bodies together, but there are no further details in the public domain, so it is difficult for us to make a judgement as to what the detail of the proposal would mean. One of the things that we are looking for is a clear statement from the Minister of the purpose of bringing the three bodies together—it is an area that would merit scrutiny. There is the very real external driver to reduce costs at the moment. It may be possible to do that in the long term. We can certainly identify some areas where there is potential for cost savings. However, there are many areas where merging could cost more money, and I hope that this is not just about a drive to save costs. We would hope that this could be about setting a higher environmental ambition for Wales.

[179] **Kirsty Williams:** We are all waiting for further details to emerge, and you are in the same position as the committee with regard to the details. However, we are all aware of the basic principle behind the Government’s intentions, so I would push you again for a view on

the principle of a merger of these bodies and whether it is more or less likely to lead to a stronger environmental challenge, best value for money, and organisations doing a better job of protecting the Welsh environment. Nobody is going to argue for less emphasis on these areas, but is the merger going to help you to achieve your stated goals as organisations?

[180] **Ms Meikle:** I was going to say that it is impossible to say, because it is. Basically, form—governance—must follow function. We want to see an improved way of managing and enhancing the environment in Wales. There are clearly things that you could do by bringing the organisations together in a more integrated way that would help towards sustainable development.

[181] As regards holistic management, one of the principles that the World Wildlife Fund set out four years ago in ‘One Planet Wales’ was that there needed to be a change in the way in which public bodies thought about their roles, vis-à-vis themselves, in safeguarding environmental goods and services for the benefit of the public. It is the job of the public sector, in various ways, to safeguard and enhance public goods for the benefit of the public, not just for one company, a farmer, or whoever happens to be exploiting one of them at the time. You ought to be doing that, not just for the benefit of the people who live in Wales now, but for the benefit of future generations. That is what sustainable development is about. There are clearly issues with the way in which organisations are currently structured, or the way in which powers are currently operated, in that they will not be effective. However, until you have set out the purpose and the way that you want to manage, regulate, encourage change and safeguard public goods, as well as everyone’s role—from local authorities, to individual landowners, to this body—it is difficult to see it. You could do it in one body. There are some places where that might be quite difficult.

[182] **Leanne Wood:** Some environmental organisations have raised concerns about the potential merger. As I understand it, one of the reasons behind that is that the Countryside Council for Wales is very much seen as the protector of the environment and that it sometimes comes into conflict with the Environment Agency. There is a fear that if these bodies come together, the Environment Agency is the bigger body and CCW’s role as the protector of the environment could be lost. You mentioned the importance of independence and transparency in your opening remarks. Is it your view that Wales does not have such a body at the moment, or is it your view that CCW is that body, and that that independence could be lost through the merger? Or am I getting confused here, given that CCW receives public money and is not, therefore, independent? Are you advocating setting up a new body as an independent, transparent overseer?

[183] **Ms Luxton:** CCW and EA have different advisory roles to the Government, and they are both seen, at certain times, as independent voices on different matters. One of the real problems will arise where each organisation has a quasi-judicial or a regulatory role in advising the other. That is a genuine and difficult problem in terms of bringing those bodies together. It may be that there are ways to resolve it that would involve bringing some of those duties in-house—within the Government—or giving them to other bodies that could take on those functions. The clear principle for us is that you need at least one independent environmental voice that can be authoritative and evidence-based.

[184] **Leanne Wood:** Do you see CCW as that voice?

[185] **Ms Luxton:** At the moment, CCW provides that voice on some things while the Environment Agency provides it on others. These roles are quite separate. I work for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and a lot of my work is linked to the protection of important nature sites. CCW performs that role, in providing an independent voice to Government on matters such as habitat regulation assessment, which is a European compliance issue. It advises the Environment Agency on the delivery of its plans, in the same

way as it would advise the Government or any developer that is taking action.

[186] You made another point at the outset, when you asked whether one body would swallow the other one up if they were brought together. It may sound like a wifty-wafty thing, but the culture of an organisation is incredibly important, as is its leadership. You are absolutely right: history shows us that the culture of the bigger organisation tends to the one that emerges. As you hold the Minister to account over the period of change that we will go through, it is very important that you focus on culture, and on the mechanisms that the Minister plans to implement to ensure that the culture of whatever body emerges from this is one that reflects the purpose that we have set. It is about form following function. There are many organisations under the umbrella of Wales Environment Link, and their views on the merits of a single body differ in strength. We have been unable to reach a single decision because we felt it was premature at this time. However, there is an understanding that there may be a political imperative to do this, particularly if there is a 'yes' vote in the referendum. It is not the role of our organisations to form a view on whether there should be one body or two bodies, or whether a set of powers should reside anywhere. We are more interested in delivery, be it advice, scientific research, action on the ground or play space. Our organisations are most interested in those things, and we will advise on how the proposals best achieve those outcomes. That is where Wales Environment Link can best help this committee.

[187] **Kirsty Williams:** Lorraine, I believe that your issues have been covered.

[188] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes, I was just going to say that it might be difficult for the witnesses to answer the question I was going to ask.

[189] **Kirsty Williams:** In that case, I will bring in Rhodri Glyn.

2.45 p.m.

[190] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Credaf ein bod yn derbyn nad ydych yn teimlo y gallwch ateb a ddylid cael un corff neu fwy nag un. Yr wyf yn deall y ddadl honno. Os na chaiff y cyrff hyn eu cyfuno, a gredwch fod angen dybryd ailstrwythuro'r cyrff hyn er mwyn iddynt gyflawni'r math o bethau yr ydych wedi cyfeirio atynt yn effeithiol, neu a gredwch fod y strwythurau presennol yn ddigonol?

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I think that we accept that you do not feel able to answer whether there should be one body or more. I understand the reasoning behind that. If these organisations are not merged, do you think that these bodies are in dire need of restructuring to ensure that they achieve the types of things that you referred to effectively, or do you think that the current structures are adequate?

[191] **Ms Luxton:** There is definitely scope for improving how we work together. We have never been in a time of greater environmental urgency across a whole range of activities, from managing our resources, which are declining, to biodiversity decline, to climate change impacts and how we mitigate and manage them. This is probably one of the biggest challenges facing governments across the world. We think that there are potential opportunities to improve the way that we work. We have consulted our members on the pros and cons; we have some practical examples of where, with two or three bodies doing a similar rather than an identical job in the same place, you might gain some resource efficiencies from merging those two functions; and we also have some examples of where it is quite hard to think through how one body could do those two different things with the same audience. We would be happy to share them, but it is probably best to give those examples to you in writing.

[192] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Byddai **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** That would be

hynny'n ddefnyddiol iawn. Yr hyn yr oeddwn yn ceisio ei gyrraedd yn y cwestiwn oedd a ydych yn credu bod y cyrff hyn yn cyflawni fel y dylent ar hyn o bryd, neu a ydych yn credu bod angen dybryd edrych arnynt? Anghofiwn am y strwythur a'r cwestiwn a ddylid cael un, dau neu dri chorff. A oes angen edrych ar yr hyn y mae'r cyrff hyn yn eu gwneud, ac edrych arno'n feirniadol er mwyn gwella'r ddarpariaeth?

extremely useful. What I was driving at in my question was whether you believe that these organisations are currently delivering as they should be, or do you think that there is a pressing need to review them? Let us forget about structures and whether there should be a single body or two or three bodies. Is there a need to look again at what these organisations do, and to take a critical look at that in order to improve provision?

[193] **Ms Luxton:** I would say that they fulfil most of their duties adequately. A number of people would like to say that they would do them in different or better ways. The issue is less about what they are doing now and more about how we move from where we are now given the scale of the challenge ahead. In that sense, I think that there is a case for looking at how we best deliver that, which could well involve quite considerable change.

[194] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Do you think that they are capable of digging that deep?

[195] **Ms Luxton:** I think that there are too many ponderables to give you a blanket answer, Rhodri. Do you wish to add to that, Anne?

[196] **Ms Meikle:** I was going to make a similar point, really. There are places where they can clearly better integrate their work. A process was started before this governance review to find the areas of overlap, the areas where they are not working together well enough, and where they could share resources—it is rather like the one for local government. That has already started to identify some areas working together. We have also done some thinking around some of that. However, we are saying that we have this very large challenge; there are increasing amounts of legislation coming out of Europe related to the environment; and we have these major challenges around climate change and so on. Even if you look at the Government's climate change strategy, you will see a whole section about working smarter by bringing together a whole raft of things. For instance, you see regulation, not just as a stick to beat people with, but as one of the incentives by which you get change. You need it as part of a programme of other incentives, such as grants, behaviour changes or ways of exemplifying different ways forward, and more advice. Integrating it together is the way to get a better outcome. That is one of the things that we definitely need to take a harder look at, because a lot of the regulation has grown up independently. It could be pulled together in a slightly better way, while working it alongside some of the things that perhaps currently sit with the CCW or FCW—although the regulation power might sit with the Environment Agency—to ensure that that joins together. An example that I always find easy to think of is the rivers, particularly rivers such as the Wye, that run from Wales into England—and the Wye also has some of the largest special areas of conservation that Europe has designated—there are four bodies managing that SAC on the Wye, with two in Wales and two in England. I am sure that that is not the best way forward for the riparian managers on either side who want to use the river. However, it is understandable that you have got where you are. There is probably a better way of joining them together. Whether you form an entirely new body to do that, or look at those functions being shared in a different way, is something that you need to look at in the detail of each case. That is an example of where it gets very complicated, because it is a very long river, and there is a big area that you are trying to manage from the start of the catchment all the way to the sea.

[197] **Kirsty Williams:** It is a good job that the former First Minister is not here; otherwise we would be having a discussion about the number of fish in the river, and you would know how many were there.

[198] **Brian Gibbons:** The number of fish in the Afan river is not improving as much as I would like. I am interested in this, although I am only substituting on this committee, and I do not have many dealings with the Countryside Council for Wales. However, I do have dealings with the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission, and the mood that I have picked up is that this is a done deal—it is not a question of ‘if’, but of ‘how’ and ‘when’. The Chair said that you were sitting carefully on the fence in your paper, and that is probably a fair judgment, but you seem to be sliding off towards the side of maintaining the structural status quo. Maybe there is a case for functional changes, but without asking you as a group to nail your colours to the mast, because you have been quite adroit at avoiding that so far, what do you think the mood is out there? My perception, without having any dealings with CCW, is that this is a done deal; it is just a case of when and how it happens. Do you think that there are people out there with real worries about this being a done deal, and when it will happen, to the extent that this committee should send a strong warning to the Minister that there are real concerns about the expected direction of travel?

[199] **Ms Luxton:** The real concerns on the ground are about delivery. That is what Wales Environment Link and the bodies within it are most interested in: how can we not only maintain what we have now, but significantly improve the outputs on the ground? That is what most of the chatter is about.

[200] **Brian Gibbons:** That goes back to Rhodri Glyn’s question, but what is the perception as to how people can best pull their socks up? Is it that the three organisations out there have failed, and that we just need a scorched earth policy whereby we start again? Is the feeling that the idea of having a single organisation would be an absolute disaster? I did not take an active interest, because I thought that this was a done deal, but everything that I am hearing today is along the lines of ‘Hold your horses—have a second think’.

[201] **Ms Luxton:** I did not come here to give you that message. I came here to say that this is not easy, and you need to think hard about the outcomes that you want to achieve from this. There is something politically attractive about designing new bodies, and designing the architecture of Government, as part of the nation-building agenda. One of the key things that we want to do is to encourage the committee to hold the Minister to account on outputs.

[202] **Kirsty Williams:** Are you convinced that the Minister herself has a clear idea at this stage about these relationships between form and function? Is this an appropriate time, given where we are with the natural environment framework, and the work that is being done on that, to be asking this question?

[203] **Ms Meikle:** You are getting to the nub of why we are in a difficult place, because what we do not want to see is any kind of reorganisation that proceeds without a clear outcome in mind. Originally, that was the aim. The Minister was clearly saying that ‘A Living Wales’ was setting a new direction, and we have all been engaged in various ways in trying to help that vision. We are quite behind the idea that, when you have that vision, you design your governance and structures to deliver it. However, what we are trying to say is that we do not believe that you should be trying to redesign the governance in advance of knowing the outcome that we are trying to achieve. So, it is a matter of trying to get the two things to work within the same timeframe without one of them leading the other, which is always a potential issue.

[204] **Brian Gibbons:** The one thing that I do not think you could accuse the Minister of is not having a clear, focused vision with regard to where this agenda is going. Do you think that the agenda has been articulated well enough and clearly enough in terms of function and so forth, or do you think that, before a final decision is made, more thought is needed? Are we where we need to be? I think that you are saying that the clarity is not there, so we need a bit more time to bring clarity, and that, once we are clear about where we should be, we should

then look at these other issues.

[205] **Ms Meikle:** I think that the vision is clear from ‘A Living Wales’, but below that there is a huge raft of ‘what does that actually mean?’ How do you do ecosystem-level management? The ‘how’ is going to determine the structure that you need to deliver that. I do not think that it is a vision problem. Now you have got there, it is a question of how you break it down into the way forward. The structure follows the ‘how’ of trying to achieve it. When we are talking about the delivery of it, we are talking about how you do that. We are trying to move from where we are now to a rather more joined-up way of going forward. You need to fill in the gap in the middle before you finalise it.

[206] **Ms Luxton:** At the moment, the ‘A Living Wales’ document is written at a relatively high policy level. There are still areas that need to be fleshed out. I think that there is a tension between two different visions, which are hidden underneath the word ‘ecosystem’. I think that there is some tension between the ecosystem services model, which is about how we use environmental resources to best effect, and how we manage as an ecosystem. I think that different parts of Government are still looking at these in slightly different ways. There is competition within that model with regard to whether this is about service delivery through ecosystems or management of an ecosystem to deliver a number of outcomes. I do not think that there has been quite a resolution in that model. I think that it is absolutely crucial to have reconciled that vision.

[207] Of course, as we know, we are losing our Minister, who has a lot of passion and drive because of her personality and personal interests. We are also at a stage where we could soon have very different legislative powers. So, there could be a great deal of change between where we are today and where we might be by the middle of May or June with a different vision. That vision may grow or change or have a new political impetus. It is important that we spend some more time looking at exactly what this vision about ecosystem management, which I think the sector has bought into, looks like on the ground and how you deliver it. Then, let us design the architecture around that.

[208] **Kirsty Williams:** I am afraid that time has beaten us. There are a number of prepared questions that we did not reach. If it is okay with you, we would like to write to you with those for a written response. The clear message from your evidence this afternoon is about how we get beyond the words of the vision. That sums up everything that I have witnessed on this committee in the short time I have been here. It is about how we get beyond the words in the document to the ‘how’ and then what governance structures we need to deliver the ‘how’. Thank you for your attendance this afternoon. We are very grateful.

[209] The next meeting of this committee will be on 10 March, when we will be scrutinising the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Mr Chris Huhne, on the Energy Bill. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I formally declare this afternoon’s meeting closed.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 3 p.m.  
The meeting ended at 3 p.m.*